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Country note**

Brazil

Summary

The Executive Director presents the country note for Brazil for a programme of cooperation for the period 2002 to 2006.

The situation of children and women

1. Brazil is the fifth largest country in the world, its land mass covering nearly half of South America. The population of 167.9 million, 60 million of whom are children under the age of 18, is ethnically diverse.

2. The economy of Brazil is the largest in Latin America and ninth largest in the world. Economic stability, democracy and technological advances in the past decade must now serve as a foundation for bringing about structural changes to reduce poverty. In the name of macroeconomic adjustment, the major share of public spending has gone towards internal and external debt reduction. Despite an annual per capita income of $4,420, socio-economic disparities are great, and 20 million children are among the 54 million people living in poverty. Overall, the poor are marginalized urban and rural populations.

3. In 1988, following 21 years of military rule, a new Constitution gave "absolute priority to children" and provided for greater decentralization and local autonomy,

* E/ICEF/2001/2.
** An addendum to the present report containing the final country programme recommendation will be submitted to the Executive Board for approval at its second regular session of 2001.

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especially to the 5,507 municipalities of the federal system, which includes 26 states and a federal district. Since Brazil approved the Child and Adolescent Statute (ECA) in 1990, inspired by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a total of 14 of the 27 goals of the World Summit for Children have been achieved. The infant mortality rate (IMR) has fallen by 25 per cent, to 36.1 per 1,000 live births, child vaccination coverage is above 90 per cent, and 95 per cent of children age 7 to 14 were enrolled in school in 1998, representing an increase from the net enrolment rate of 86 per cent in 1991. The number of child workers between the ages of 5 and 14 decreased by 25 per cent between 1992 and 1999, to 2.9 million.

4. Yet widespread disparities exist. Despite policies and services aimed at providing children with a good start in life, 50,000 babies die annually in their first month. One third of the 2.9 million children born each year are not registered, despite public advocacy campaigns; that figure rises above 50 per cent in the north and north-east, the poorest and most marginalized regions of the country. According to 1999 data, less than 9 per cent of children 0 to 3 years of age benefited from early childhood development (ECD) programmes. For those 4 to 6 years of age, 57.9 per cent were enrolled in pre-schools.

5. Almost 2 million children — mostly working children and those with disabilities — are not enrolled in school. The 3.9 per cent drop-out rate and 23.4 per cent repetition rate are being tackled by the Government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) through curricula reviews, teacher skills-building, nascent community participation in school management, extra-curricular activities, tutoring for special needs students, and expanded coordination among school, family and community.

6. Only 41 per cent of adolescents from 15 to 19 years of age finish 8 years of primary education, and one third finish secondary education. Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, early pregnancy, drug abuse and violence. Experience has demonstrated that the risk of these problems falls when youth identity and autonomy are developed through participation in educational, cultural, athletic and community activities. Growing violence among 15- to 19-year-old men has reduced male life expectancy by three years. Some 30,000 adolescents are detained every year and often placed in facilities with limited opportunities for their psychosocial and physical development.

7. Child labour, sexual abuse, violence, HIV/AIDS and low access to sanitation and clean water cut across the life cycle, affecting children from birth through adolescence. Modest stipends to poor families, in conjunction with extra-curricular activities, teacher training and evolving social attitudes, have contributed to declining child labour and increased school enrolment and completion.

8. Domestic and community violence, as well as sexual abuse and exploitation of children, are increasingly recognized as public issues. Beyond encouragement for reporting of abuses, improved monitoring and campaigns are calling for coordinated action among government, NGOs and civil society.

Lessons learned from past cooperation

9. Based on the 1997 mid-term review, several key lessons were identified for programme formulation, including the need to modify the past sectoral structure. The value of the intersectoral approach was recognized, as witnessed through the selection and implementation of such theme areas as child labour, sexual exploitation and ECD. The review also concluded that the five UNICEF zone offices in the poorest regions of Brazil constitute a comparative advantage. Networking with agencies such as the World Bank, International Labour Organization and United States Agency for International Development has strengthened the impact of both local-level capacity-building and national advocacy and policy development efforts.

10. A very successful project took place in the north-east state of Ceara, where 172 municipalities competed for the UNICEF Seal of Approval. This innovative project demonstrated that within the space of one year, local governments could collaborate to increase primary school enrolment, reduce IMR and create effective Child Rights Councils, without the need for significant new financial resources. This experience also charted an effective strategy for UNICEF to support the rapidly expanding decentralization process, allowing for wide-range coverage of municipalities without requiring time-consuming and costly individual municipal projects. This strategy represents a viable initiative for UNICEF and others to reach and mobilize many more municipalities in Brazil.

11. Both long-term and new partnerships are critical in giving child rights full value. The Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education, municipal health and education managers, journalists and paediatricians have long been partners in Brazil in promoting child survival and development. At the same time, however, UNICEF needs to work with the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Social Welfare in combating child abuse, reducing child labour and promoting extra-curricular activities for youth. Private sector and non-profit partners are important allies in promoting respect for child rights, and not just as potential donors.

12. The mass media are critical in keeping social issues and child rights on the public agenda, as they have strengthened their quality of coverage and analysis over the past decade, and maintained freedom of the press. Also, 90 per cent of Brazilian households have easy access to radio and television. The rapid growth of computer and Internet access obliges UNICEF to manage the complexity of information sharing through constantly evolving communication technology.

13. UNICEF credibility is built through high visibility of its stance on children's issues, including an annual fund-raising telethon on "REDE GLOBO". For example, the fact that children live in garbage dumps was an acceptable norm until 1999, when public outrage and viable alternatives were articulated in a campaign launched with 40 NGOs and government groups to remove 50,000 children by the year 2002. The public, NGOs and socially responsible private sector groups have urged UNICEF to maintain this public voice.

Proposed country programme strategy

14. The principles of equality, non-discrimination, participation and intersectorality are keys to the new country programme. UNICEF will continue to place and maintain the child at the centre of the national agenda. During the next five-year period, UNICEF will work to assure that the rights of all boys and girls are fully guaranteed. Using the life cycle approach, UNICEF will mobilize the Government, civil society and the private sector, based on the tenets of ECA and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

15. Country programme strategies will include: social and political mobilization for child rights; capacity-building for decentralization to address disparities; and expansion of service delivery models for the most vulnerable and excluded children. The ability of UNICEF to work at all levels and in all sectors will be maintained by drawing from municipal and community-based experiences in priority regions to formulate policy thrusts. UNICEF will maintain its capacity and cutting edge through research, monitoring and analyses that contribute to refining strategies and strengthening information sharing. Four programmes will support government and civil society commitments to ECA.

16. Through the *early childhood development (ECD) programme*, UNICEF will work with counterparts to ensure that the critical impact of ECD is better appreciated by families, communities, civil society and government at all levels. The main focus will be on encouraging families to protect their children and to help them reach their fullest development and potential. The programme will increase family capacity to participate and strengthen public demand for high-quality early stimulation. Developing clearer guidelines for reasonable resource allocation will be supported. Communication strategies must be put into action to support this process and, more broadly, to guarantee access, with priority to the most vulnerable children.

17. Through the *education for inclusion programme*, UNICEF will support initiatives that guarantee the right of all children 7 to 14 years of age to attend school, to learn in supportive environments and to develop citizenship skills for exercising their rights. As learning is not restricted to the school setting, the programme will provide additional learning and participation opportunities, as well as safe spaces. This will include health, sports, recreation and cultural activities. UNICEF will expand previous work with partners, including federal ministries, state and municipal education secretaries, the media, the private sector and NGOs, to reach marginalized children, including, inter alia, those with disabilities, working children and those living in the most remote regions. Key contributions will include development of methodologies to guarantee the inclusion and rights of the most excluded, which will ultimately benefit all primary-level students.

18. Adolescents from 15 to 18 years of age, no longer young children but not yet adults, must be granted opportunities to become productive citizens. UNICEF will work through the *adolescent citizenship programme* to improve access to quality secondary education, responsive health services and stimulating interactive communication programmes. For adolescents who enter the labour force without finishing school, UNICEF will support the development of viable alternatives, or "second-chance" schooling opportunities. Work with NGOs, foundations, municipal governments and United Nations agencies will be key in developing public policies

that recognize youth as productive citizens. Adolescents in conflict with the law will be given special attention.

19. The *special protection and monitoring programme* will support the development of protection measures for children and adolescents at special risk, in order to eradicate child labour and reduce domestic violence and sexual exploitation. HIV/AIDS prevention and family coping strategies will be undertaken in partnership with families, the United Nations Theme Group on AIDS, national, state and municipal Councils on Children and Adolescents, NGOs, the media and the Government. Public and government awareness of these issues requires concerted mobilization and advocacy.

20. Cross-sectoral costs will support the four programmes; regional initiatives; staff training; technical and support staff, plus consultant salaries and travel; and operational costs not covered by the support budget.

21. Given Brazil's size and social and geographic disparities, UNICEF will work through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) to ensure that greater investment of resources will be focused on the north and north-east. UNICEF will expand on successful civil society and private sector partnership-building efforts which, in addition to mobilizing funding for "other resources", will expand existing movements to place and sustain child rights issues on the public and political agenda.

Estimated programme budget

Estimated programme cooperation, 2002-2006[a]

(In thousands of United States dollars)

	Regular resources	*Other resources*	*Total*
Early childhood development	-	14 400	14 400
Education for inclusion	-	18 000	18 000
Adolescent citizenship	-	14 400	14 400
Special protection and monitoring	-	25 200	25 200
Cross-sectoral costs	3 705	14 295	18 000
Total	**3 705**	**86 295**	**90 000**

[a] These are indicative figures only which are subject to change once aggregate financial data are finalized.